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October 17, 2003

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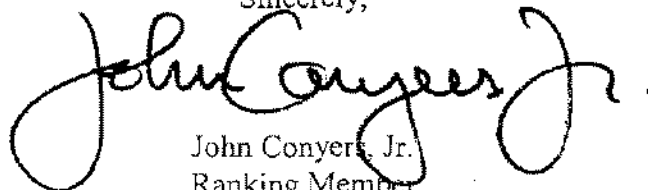
Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to express my extreme displeasure over Lieutenant General William Boykin's remarks about the war and the Muslim religion. Lt. Gen. Boykin serves as deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence and is charged with heading a Pentagon office that focuses on finding Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein and other targets. This is a critical policymaking position, and it is outrageous that someone who holds such extreme, closed-minded, zealous views would be allowed such a prominent position in our military.

Lt. Gen. Boykin's remarks over the past few years, including remarks that Islamic extremists hate the United States because "we're a Christian nation," that "our spiritual enemy will only be defeated if we come against them in the name of Jesus," that President Bush "is in the White House because God put him there," and that Boykin's "god was a real god and [the Muslim god] was an idol," are disgraceful and wholly inappropriate for a man in his position. These remarks are inflammatory to Muslims in our communities and abroad.

While every American has the freedom to speak his mind and express his opinion, it is essential that those who hold high profile, policymaking positions in our government exercise judgment in their public speaking. Lt. Gen. Boykin clearly lacks such judgment. I urge you to reassign or reprimand him; we cannot afford to have such an extremist speaking on behalf of our nation and our military.

Sincerely,



John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary